Canada's History is Marked by

By TED SHACKLEFORD

MONEY MUDDLES

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S chequered and confused coin history was quiet and orderly compared to conditions which prevailed almost from the beginning of Canada's colonization.

The age-old monetary system of barter was used almost exclusively at the start, up to about 1670, but from then on the troubles began.

What coinage there was in the early days of the French colony was a random collection of French coins, English, Spanish and Portuguese.

In 1670 King Louis XIV of France issued an edict calling for the striking of a silver 15 "Sol" piece. The Sol at that time had a value in Canada of one penny.

Two years later Louis issued another edict, raising the value of the coin to 20 Sols. The piece is now one of the rarest of Canadian coins.

Wampum, made by Indians from small tubes of sea shells, was an accepted "coin" right through this period, up to 1704. Colonists stopped using it then but Indians kept right on with it until about 1825.

The wampum was made in two colors—white was worth a half-penny and blue was worth a penny. Its value was undermined by cheap counterfeits from Europe.

Things were relatively quiet on the Canadian money front up to 1685, but it was the lull before the storm. In that year the French authorities had to resort to promissory notes written on playing cards to pay the troops.

This playing card money was a temporary measure only but the cards began circulating among people as a common means of exchange. The cards were in use until the fall of Quebec in 1759.

This is a sample of playing-card money, once freely circulated in Canada.

THE MONEY was first made from quarters of playing cards, with denominations of 15 sols, 40 sols and four francs. It was given authority by affixing the seal of the colony's treasurer and having the governor sign it.

Later issues, as the money became more popular, took the form of quarter cards, half cards and whole cards for different values.

After Wolfe defeated Montcalm and took Quebec in 1759, the French government repudiated the obligations represented by the card money. It eventually redeemed a large part of it at 25 per cent of face value.

With British control of Canada the country entered a period very like the early days of British Columbia, with Spanish, British and United States coins in use, together with tokens of all kinds.

Sterling was the official monetary unit, but the situation was complicated as there was relatively little sterling currency in the area.

When the United States declared war on Great Britain in 1812 the belief was that the first attack would come through Canada.

THE CONGLOMERATION of bills, coins and tokens then in existence were of little use to the British authorities, so "Army bills" were issued with face values of four, 25, 50, 100 and 400 Spanish dollars. As the war progressed bills of one, two, three, five, eight, 10, 12, 16 and 20 dollars were added to the series.

Merchants at first were suspicious of this paper money and they ordered, on their own account, a huge supply of copper tokens inscribed "Pure Copper Preferable to Paper."

By the end of the war suspicion had dwindled and was erased completely when all outstanding bills, totalling 5,000,000 Spanish dollars, were redeemed in silver or gold.

But once again the currency of the colony was in chaos. And counterfeiters had a field day.

"Phantom" banks were established — some in single offices, some in the heads of swindlers—and fake bills were printed, similar in appearance to genuine bills.

Most of the counterfeit bills were put into circulation south of the U.S.-Canadian border where they were accepted as genuine for a time.

A first issue of Canadian coins was introduced at the same time by three banks—the Bank of Montreal, the Banque de Peuple and the City Bank of Quebec—in 1817.

The coins were half-penny and one-penny coins, but Canada had to wait another 41 years for its first coins bearing the likeness of the reigning British sovereign—Queen Victoria.

The story of Canada's coin history will be concluded next week.

ON COLLEGE BOARDS

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ship winner, Carole McClellan. He was also in "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay" and that extremely hardy perennial, "Sunday Costs Five Pesos."

Incidentally, one of the publicity directors for "Ah, Wilderness" was also in "Today of All Days." Barry Gelling was "Mr. Bispham," the harassed father of beauty queen "Gladys," then played so inimitably by Marylyn Cockburn.

Paterfamilias in the Miller household it "Nat," played by Colin Ross. Colin is a second-year student whose name does not appear in connection with "The Applecart" but who was stage manager for North Saanich High School's very successful presentation of "The Importance of Being Earnest." In 1956 he was "Eric" in a rather nondescript opus called "No, Not the Russians."

"Lily" in "Ah, Wilderness" is Margaret Johnston, a very devoted young actress who was high among the nominees for a senior drama scholarship when she played the name part in Sophocles' "Antigone" at Royal Oak High School. The following year, 1956, Miss Johnston displayed a pretty turn of versatility, forsaking the tragic "Antigone" and providing a most pleasant interpretation of the light-hearted "Dona Laura" in the Quinteros' "A Sunny Morning."

Irene Webb, who won the best actress award in the Cowichan Schools' drama festival when she was in Grade 11, is O'Neill's Irish maid, "Norah." Her award-winning role was that of "Libby Hartland" in T. C. Matheson's "Catch a Falling Star."

There is a bartender in "Ah, Wilderness" who is confronted by the two sharply contrasted patrons, a rather uncertain "Richard" and the tough, flashy opportunist, "Belle." Ed Pomeroy plays the bartender and he was connected with a group at Victoria High School rejoicing in the title of the "Calamity Players." Ed was also stage manager for the Columbine Club's festival presentation of "Back to Zero" last year.

The father of girl-friend "Muriel" is played by Milt Calder who participated in various theatrical projects at Weyburn, Saskatchewan, before he came to Victoria.

Elizabeth Roper who was a parlormaid in the Shavian opus of 1958 is "Mrs. Miller" in this year's play. While at St. Margaret's School Elizabeth played "Katherine of Aragon" in "White Queen, Red Queen," one of T. B. Morris' multitudinous historical plays.

So here is a cast with a large and varied experience.

HOWEVER, it has been pointed out more times than it is possible to contemplate that a successful production depends in no small measure on the backstage crew.

For "Ah, Wilderness" Barry Gelling and Ken Bull are in charge of publicity. Bob E. Smith and Marilyn Ardley have the front of the house and the responsible position of costume designer director as he was for "The Applecart." Lorne Ross, who also performed the same duty for last year's play, takes care of sound.

Makeup comes under Dianne Hamlet whose duty during rehearsal of "holding the book" comes to an abrupt end when opening night rolls around. Jill Robertson marshals the properties and the responsible position of ocstume designer is held by Carole Slater. The whole question of design this year may not be as embracing or as fundamental as that faced by Miss Sharon Plows last year. Nevertheless, there is absolutely no facet of any stage production which is incapable of generating an empathic response in an audience and costume has as great potentialities in this respect as any and more than most.

The director is Mrs. Flora Nicholson who also guided "The Crucible," "The Lady's Not for Burning" and "The Applecart." During January, when illness laid Mrs. Nicholson low, her place was taken by Gil Bunch whose productions of such plays as "Vigil," "Medea" and "The Importance of Being Earnest" were such thorough delights.

Over at least the past three years the College play has been presented, arena style, in the Union Room.

This mode of presentation and the locale always had their attractions but, to me, they always conjured up visions either of a Roman amphitheatre with tiers of customers surrounding and overlooking the action or of a basement cabaret I used to visit hard by the Casino at Monte Carlo. I always found that the College Players early succeeded in dispelling my expectations of either gladiators or coquettes but, equally, I always remained with the thought that this was just one more obstacle—however caused—that they had to overcome.

This year, however, I shall be unattended by the spirits either of dying Christians or of husky chanteuses. "Ah, Wilderness" is to be presented on an extended stage in the College Auditorium. In point of fact, O'Neill's play achieves yet further distinction by being the first production to grace the new boards.

Both the play and the players will surely be worthy.